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ABSTRACT

Three off campus private alternative schools have been supported, in part, by the Portland, Oregon, Public Schools. The students, mostly high school age, are largely dropouts or on the verge of dropping out of school. Many were referred because of behavior, attendance, or other discipline problems. At least half of the students in each school have had juvenile court involvement, and, for some, enrollment is a probationary requirement. Information is provided for each school on facilities and resources, staff, students, program, and student achievement. The single most significant feature of the schools is the special kind of relationship among staff members and especially with the disenchanted youths. Students receive attention that is consistent in time and quality, and that their homes or regular schools did not provide. (MLF)

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EVALUATION DEPARTMENT
PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

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EA 016 190

Administrative Summary

Portland Public Schools Supported Private Alternative School Programs

Albina Youth Opportunity School

Lents Education Center

Open Meadow Learning Center

1982-83

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Evaluation Specialist

Portland Public Schools

Evaluation Department

OVERVIEW OF PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SUPPORTED PRIVATE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

The Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS), Lents Education Center (LEC), and Open Meadow Learning Center (OMLC) are the three, off campus private alternative schools. They have been supported, in part, by the Portland Public Schools for the last ten years or more. All serve similar students of high school age with a few students in grades 7 and 8. The students are largely dropouts or on the verge of dropping out with many being referred from schools and law enforcement agencies because of behavior, attendance, or other discipline problems. About half or more in each school has had juvenile court involvement and, for some, enrollment in the school is a probationary requirement. Behavior and attitude change are important goals of the schools.

Every school's educational program emphasizes the basic skills of reading, language usage, math, and aspects of social studies. Some attention is also given to physical education and other electives. The latter are important to many students for whom a major accomplishment is getting them to participate and do schoolwork. The average daily attendance for the schools ranges from about 65 to 80 percent. While the schools serve fairly comparable students, there are some differences in the populations and in the way each school operates.

AYOS, the oldest of the three schools, is located at 3710 N. Mississippi Street--a few blocks from Boise School. The program operates two daily sessions, morning and afternoon, of four periods each. Classes are self-contained where subject matter rather than students is rotated. Instruction is largely individualized and provided by a team of three teachers. Students earn high school credit for work completed. Most students reside nearby in the Northeast area.

The arrangement established by AYOS and followed for many years is for students to enroll in public schools in the fall with AYOS receiving referrals after school starts. Only a few students are carried over from the previous spring, so the early enrollment is small, increases to a total daily enrollment of about 30 in late fall, and reaches a peak of about 50 in February. AYOS arranges with schools for students to return at appropriate intervals and as soon as they are ready, so only a few are enrolled at AYOS for a full year. A major goal of AYOS is returning students to public schools or other satisfactory placement. A total of about 100 to 125 students is served each year.

LEC is located at 9207 S.E. Foster Road, a short distance from Marshall High School, and serves students mainly in the Southeast area. One session per day is conducted from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. with a half-hour lunch. Daily schedules are varied to accommodate for elective type courses held only once or twice a week. Reading/language usage, math, and history/science are scheduled daily or almost daily with the remainder of the time divided among the once or twice a week classes.

Instruction is generally provided by one teacher in a small group. Some grouping is by skill level, others by subject or teacher. The classes of about 8 to 10 students each are conducted much like traditional ones, but the small number permits greater individual attention. An enrollment of about 30 is generally maintained throughout the year with about a third to a half enrolled for the full school year. A total of about 70 is served during the year.

OMLC is located at 7602 N. Emerald Avenue and primarily serves students residing in the North Portland area. The Center operates one session which has a daily schedule of five class periods running from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The school year is divided into quarters corresponding to those of the District. Students enroll in math, language usage which includes reading and writing, and social studies along with electives. Like the other schools, a major goal of OMLC is to transition students to public schools or other satisfactory placement.

Instruction is largely provided by individual teachers working with small student groups in separate classes. An enrollment of 30-32 students is generally maintained throughout the year with eight to ten students per class. Students may receive credit for satisfactory completion of work in each quarter and may even graduate from OMLC, as two or three do each year. OMLC is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and is registered with SDE as a private school. A total of about 50 students ar served during the year.

Contrary to what may seem to be the case, students enrolled in the alternative schools are not significantly learning handicapped or disabled. They can do school work and they do it. The quality indicates they probably were performing at or near grade level when they began dropping out, which is assumed to be at or near the middle school level. Thus, students appear to be disenchanted, not disabled.

Perhaps the single, most significant feature of the three private alternative schools is not so much the curriculum, but the special kind of relationship among staff members and especially with the disenchanted youths. Alternative school enrollees are largely those who respond only to frequent and immediate attention - attention that is consistent in time and quality, attention that their homes or regular schools did not provide. Staff members provide this attention in and out of the classroom. They respond immediately and in ways characteristic of individuals who have very high expectations of their charges. Each member of each school has his/her own way of being firm, rewarding appropriate behavior, stimulating inquiry, motivating, helping, etc., with the common denominator being consistency in giving attention these students needed. The result is students each of whom is engaged in educationally worthwhile activities and behavior virtually at all times.

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADE/AGE SERVED	AVE./TOTAL ENROLLMENT	NO. OF STAFF FTE	TOTAL BUDGET	FUNDS BY PPS	DURATION	KEY SCHOOL FEATURES
Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS) Director: Rance Spruill 288-5813	3710 N. Mississippi	Gr. 7-12 Most 14-16 yrs.	Ave. 30-50 Total 110	7.0	$175,000	$22,870 general fund $33,300 State Disadvantaged Child Project $20,000 State Basic School Support	Session 1 8:30-11:30 a.m. Session 2 12:30-3:30 p.m.	1. AYOS' operational mode is different from the other schools. Students enroll in regular schools in the fall; AYOS receives referrals, only a few students are carried over; and attempts to return the students as soon as possible. A considerable amount of advising and counseling is provided to facilitate returns. 2. Virtually all students are residents of the district with most from the Jefferson and Grant service areas. 3. About 40% of the students voluntarily admit juvenile court involvement, a few are referred by the courts. 4. Students enroll in one session. All are instructed in reading, math, language, social studies, health and P.E. 5. Average daily attendance is 63%. 6. With the team of three teachers, students get immediate, personal attention. Some are reluctant learners who need considerable attention to keep on task. 7. AYOS conducts a followup of its students of the previous school year. Data generally show about 40% return to high school or graduate. Overall, the situations for about 65-70 percent appear satisfactory. Those for about 25% are somewhat questionable or unsatisfactory and the situations for the remaining are unknown or undeterminable.

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADE/AGE SERVED	AVE./TOTAL ENROLLMENT	NO. OF STAFF FTE	TOTAL BUDGET	FUNDS BY PPS	DURATION	KEY SCHOOL FEATURES
Lents Education Center (LEC) Director: Steven Ritchie 774-6358	9207 S.E. Foster Rd.	Gr. 7-12 Most 14-15 yrs.	Ave. 33 Total 70	5.00	$75,000	$27,564 general fund $18,750 State Basic School Support	10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. (Includes lunch)	1. Many LEC students enrolled the previous spring return in the fall, so enrollment is near capacity at the beginning of the year. A few are transitioned during the year with most occurring in the fall. About a dozen students are usually enrolled for the full year. 2. Nearly all students are residents of the district and most are from the southeast area. 3. Nearly half (42%) have had involvement with the juvenile justice system. 4. All students are enrolled in reading/language usage, math, and history/science and have choices in several electives. Basic skills consume about 80% of the time. 5. Average daily attendance is about 80%. 6. Class size is small and held in separate rooms so teachers can provide considerable personal attention. LEC has been quite successful in keeping students on task and maintaining compliance. 7. LEC tests students for placement and achievement pretest and tests again at the end of the school year. It also provides various demographic information on students and attendance. It is estimated that about two-thirds of the transitions are satisfactory; most of the remaining are dropped for non-attendance or behavior violations. Achievement data show appreciable gains for about two-thirds or more of the students.

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADE/AGE SERVED	AVE./TOTAL ENROLLMENT	NO. OF STAFF FTE	TOTAL BUDGET	FUNDS BY PPS	DURATION	KEY SCHOOL FEATURES
Open Meadow Learning Center (OMLC) Director: Carol Smith 285-0508	7602 N. Emerald	Gr. 8-12 Most 15-17 yrs.	Ave. 35 Total 50	5.00	$117,500	$27,564 general fund $17,849 State Basic School Support	9:00 a.m. 1:30 p.m.	1. Half or more of OMLC students enrolled the previous spring return in the fall, so enrollment is near capacity at the beginning of the year. Turnover of students is less at OMLC than at the other schools. Return to regular schools is a major goal. 2. Virtually all students are residents of the district and most are from the north Portland area. OMLC contracts with the city and PPS for ten students. 3. About 85% have had juvenile court involvement with several on probation or parole. 4. The school year is divided into regular school quarters with five classes held daily. Students enroll in reading, language usage, math, social studies, and electives. Students receive credit and may graduate from OMLC. 5. Average daily attendance is about 85%. Average length of stay is over six months with some staying for two years. 6. Class size is small so students receive considerable personal attention -- off task behavior is minimal. 7. Satisfactory completion of work each quarter is required to maintain enrollment. Only one or two are expelled or put on probation for unsatisfactory performance. Most students return to regular schools, 5 or 6 enroll in GED programs, and 2 or 3 graduate from OMLC. Only a few drop out or run away.

ALBINA YOUTH OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

The Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS) began in June 1966 and has continued operations since that time. It has been at its present location at 3710 N. Mississippi Street since December 1971. The director, Rance Spruill, has been with AYOS almost since it was founded and has continued as director since 1968. He holds a degree in sociology and has had considerable training and experience in dealing with "street culture" youths.

The building occupied by AYOS is a former trucking company warehouse of substantial brick and cement block construction. It is roomy and well kept. The classroom area is formed within the large open area by placement of portable blackboards, bookcases, cabinets, desks, and other furnishings. The administrative area is located in a balcony overlooking nearly all of the area below. An office for the director and a room once used as the middle school classroom are immediately below the balcony. Pool tables and a large lounge area are located between the classroom area and the directors office on the main floor. Although the facilities are quite satisfactory, some building improvements are anticipated in the near future to reduce noise, conserve energy, and make better use of the space. AYOS is purchasing the facility and expects to make its final payment within two years. Besides their own building, AYOS uses the facilities at the Matt Dishma Community Center for physical education.

A large quantity and variety of educational materials are available having been accumulated over the years. Resources of the district are used where they are available and appropriate for the students. The educational materials and equipment are adequate for the program.

The total budget for the 1982-83 school year is slightly over $175,000. A total of $56,170.00 is derived from the district's general and State Disadvantaged Child funds, about $20,000 expected from State Basic School Support, $25,000 from the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust, and the rest in smaller amounts up to $8,000 from a number of businesses, industries, private foundations, and individuals.

STAFF

Besides the director, the staff includes three teachers, a counselor, a psychologist/family service agent, and communications specialist/fund raiser. All seven are full time employees, and all have college degrees. All teachers hold Oregon teaching certificates and have been at AYOS from three to nine years. The counselor has been at the school for seven years, and the remaining two are in their second year. Based on their formal qualifications and experience, the staff is well qualified to conduct the program.

AYOS evaluates its staff members using various forms containing information on personal goals to be accomplished during the year, work plans, records of

attendance and tardies, and ratings of performance characteristics. Individual staff member records are maintained and reviewed several times during the year with the director.

STUDENTS

AYOS's contract with the District states that a capacity of 50 students will be maintained; the school can handle 25 students in each of its morning and afternoon sessions. Enrollment is not constant. It builds gradually until the second grading period to about 50 and is fairly constant the remainder of the year.

The 126 students enrolled during the 1981-82 school year are typical of the students enrolled currently and expected to enroll the remainder of the year. Last year students were in the age range of 12 to 18 years with a little over 80 percent in the 14 to 16 year range. Over half lived in single parent families and only about a quarter lived with both parents. Males outnumber females about two to one. Nearly 90 percent were Black, and most of the remaining were white.

Nearly 40 percent of the students had prior juvenile court involvement, and nearly 30 percent were suspended or expelled from public schools. These figures indicate that many AYOS students tend to "act out" and find it difficult to control their behavior in regular school settings. School records indicated that physical aggression toward others was not uncommon. Non-attendance and behavioral problems are the most frequent reasons given for referral to AYOS.

Most students come from Jefferson and Grant high schools which are located in the low income areas of Portland. Over 40 percent are students who are wards of the court or reside with families receiving public aid or assistance from CDS/AFS or other sources. Virtually all students reside in the area served by Portland Public Schools.

PROGRAM

AYOS has combined the middle school and high school programs the past two years instead of keeping them physically separated. The School continues to offer a morning and an afternoon session. All students meet as one class where instruction is by team teaching and subject matter changes according to schedule. Classes run for 40 to 45 minutes with four classes in each session. Students attend either the morning or afternoon session.

The educational program is approved by the State Board of Education and AYOS offers academic credit which is accepted by high schools toward graduation. AYOS's general math, algebra, and personal finance courses correspond to regular high school courses and have the same course numbers. Courses in English, social studies, and developmental reading are also similarly identified. Other courses include health education, physical education, and a variety of mini courses.

Under the team teaching concept, virtually all instruction is individualized with one or two teachers working one-on-one with a student on the side at nearly all times. Counseling is also provided particularly for students with behavioral problems. Attendance, student behavior, and academic work are monitored by each student's counselor/advocate. A family therapist provides extended assistance to support the work of the counselor/advocate. A significant amount of attention is given to behavioral problems which were the reasons given for virtually every student being placed at AYOS.

In search of ways to change student behavior, AYOS and MCESD began participating jointly in a research project funded by the Northwest Area Foundation to examine the effect of a critical thinking/writing development program on student behavior and writing skills. More favorable outcomes in terms of overall educational and social improvement are expected as students begin to make better decisions effecting their lives. The program is expected to continue for two years beyond the current planning year.

AYOS generally expects students enrolled in spring to begin in public schools in the fall. Thus, there is not a carryover of students from spring to fall. The school's general strategy is to keep students in public schools as much as possible. As a result, enrollment is low at the beginning of the school year and increases to near capacity about midyear. Unlike the other two private alternative schools, only a small number remains at AYOS for a full school year.

ACHIEVEMENT

In 1981-82 a total of 126 students were enrolled at AYOS. This is only a few short of the total number enrolled in 1980-81 when AYOS had both a high school and middle school programs. Peak enrollment is reached about midyear after the semester break. As of the second week of February 1983, a total of 74 students had been enrolled with 55 currently enrolled. Average daily attendance is 63 percent which is about the same as in prior years. Durations of stays at AYOS last year ranged from about a school quarter to a semester.

Observations of classroom work tend to indicate better performances by students than in earlier years, e.g., most students on task, paying attention, more productive. The quality of their work tends to belie their entering achievement test scores. While there are some performing at very low levels, there are a number whose work appears to be near grade level with some above. Achievement records over the last two years showed that in each of the four basic classes, 60 to 80 percent received grades for their work and 25 to 30 percent received high school credit. In previous years fewer students did sufficient work to earn credits.

AYOS conducts follow-up studies of their students one year to 18 months later. The last study completed in Spring 1982 of 99 high school students enrolled the previous year showed 51 attending public schools or graduated, 14 in vocational/alternative schools, and a couple more gainfully employed for a total of nearly 70 percent with satisfactory outcomes. For 24 more their outcomes were considered unsatisfactory with about an equal number being in a

detention facility or "not in school" indicating no relevant status. The statuses of the remaining, except one deceased, were unknown. Data presented on court referral records likewise indicated quite satisfactory outcomes.

In general, achievements of the students appear to be at least as good as in previous years. Students are involved regularly in educationally worthwhile work and appear to gain from their experiences. Follow-up of students show that a majority make a satisfactory adjustment in their lives.

COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

AYOS continues to operate in much the same manner as last year with the basic educational program relatively unchanged. Students meet as a group with a team of three teachers and follow a schedule of four classes in two separate three-hour sessions. Students attend either a morning or afternoon session. Enrollment and attendance have remained at about the same level as in previous years.

Nearly all instruction is individualized -- much of it being remedial for most students. A major concern of AYOS, however, is shaping behavior to enable students to return to regular schools or other satisfactory placement. This year the school joined with MCESD in a specially funded program designed to develop critical thinking and writing skills through specially prepared materials. The program is expected to impact upon student attitudes and behavior. The Director commented that perhaps through the change to team teaching, special program, or other reasons, student behavior has improved quite dramatically especially in relation to conflicts between students.

AYOS continues to offer an acceptable alternative educational program for potential dropouts and for students who have been expelled or suspended. Nearly 70 percent result in satisfactory placement; half return to public schools with a few graduating each year. The fact that AYOS continues to serve about as many students as it had in the past indicates a continuing need for the services of the school.

LENTS EDUCATION CENTER

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

The Lents Education Center (LEC) began in the Southeast in 1974 and has been at its present location at 9207 S.E. Foster Road since June 1976. Steven Ritchie became the Director in September 1978 and has maintained the position since that time. He has been at the Center since 1976.

The Center is located on the second floor of what was once a hotel. Occasional remodeling has kept the building up to the required city code standards. While the building gives the appearance of being run down, it is not abused by the students and seems adequate for the program. Over the years, LEC has accumulated furnishings and sufficient learning materials to conduct its program. LEC has regular district "pony" service, and uses resources of the district regularly.

The total budget for the Center for 1982-83 is about $90,000. Portland Public Schools contributes $27,564 and about $18,750 more is derived from State Basic School Support. The remaining comes from private foundations, special grants, juvenile justice system, businesses and industries, fund raising events, and tuitions.

STAFF

The staff includes the director, who also serves as a teacher, and four full time teachers; one also serves as a counselor. A part time teacher handles a four-hour weekly evening class for GED students. The GED class has been supported by Portland Community College Adult Education for about six years. In January, LEC started a morning GED class on a trial basis. A half-time teacher paid by the Center has been added for this purpose. Staff members have been at LEC from one to three years. Last year, LEC shared a counselor with two other private alternative schools. When funding for the counselor was discontinued about midyear, LEC was able to continue the position part-time and this year it is full time. Due largely to the uncertainties of funding and low salary levels, there is some staff turnover each year.

LEC again has assembled an excellent staff with teachers who are able to get the most out of the students with seemingly, very little effort. Students are on task virtually 100 percent of the time they are in class.

STUDENTS

The PPS contract with LEC is for 20 students; LEC maintains an average enrollment of 33 to 35. The classrooms and facilities are small and accommodating more students would result in crowding. Besides space and instructional intent, the budget also limits the number of students that can be accommodated. A total of 64 students were enrolled during the 1981-82 school year; nearly all were residents of the district.

Students range in age from 12 to 17 with most being 14 to 15. A few more females than males were enrolled which was a shift from the previous year where males outnumbered females about two to one. A little over 60 percentcame from low income families and about 75 percent lived with a single parent; less than 15 percent lived with two parents. Slightly over 40 percent of the students were juvenile offenders. The proportion of juvenile offenders was down slightly from the previous year, perhaps, because the proportion of males, the most frequent offenders, was smaller than last year.

Over 90 percent of the referred students had severe attendance problems in public schools, and almost 40 percent had serious behavior problems resulting in disciplinary actions. Eleven students had been expelled from public schools prior to their enrollment at LEC.

In order to enroll at LEC, students must have a formal referral from a public school or from the juvenile justice system, and have a personal interview. New students are enrolled, if space is available, about every four to five weeks. There are usually 12 to 15 names on a waiting list.

According to test scores, most students show fairly serious deficiencies in basic skills achievement. The severity of the deficiencies are sometimes exaggerated, perhaps, as a result of test taking attitude. The work of many more students shows they probably achieved quite well until their last few years in school when they began to lose interest. These students are not learning disabled or handicapped; they simply have not continued to use their abilities in academic pursuits. It is not unusual to find students making apparently remarkable achievement gains when they begin to concentrate as they once did. Students who study Greek mythology, read Homer, and write their own myths do not seem handicapped.

PROGRAM

The LEC program includes reading, math, science and social studies, and selected life skill classes. A counseling group session is also held regularly. The basic skills, including writing, are exercised in other classes as well as in the basic ones. Reading and math classes meet every day, social studies and science and the life skills classes meet four times a week, and counseling groups and PE are held once a week. The life skills classes include personal finance, health, art, communications, and some controlled PE activities directed at group participation, personal fitness, and cooperation rather than competition. Classes usually run for 45 minutes with the school day beginning at 9:30 A.M. and ending at 2:00 P.M.

Reading instruction which also includes language usage, is accomplished by ability grouping; math classes are individualized with students working through sequences of worksheets at their own pace. In social studies and science classes, students are grouped according to reading levels with course content adjusted accordingly and to the extent necessary. The life skill classes and counseling groups are generally uniform for all students.

Although students may earn credit for academic work, the Center does not offer a diploma for graduation. Credit can be applied toward graduation from a public school, and students are encouraged to earn credits to help in their return. For older students who have too few credits or whose skills are not sufficient to enable them to graduate in a reasonable time, LEC assists them in enrolling in a GED program, finding suitable job training, or seeking employment. The major emphasis of LEC is to enable students to make a successful transition to regular public schools or to another appropriate setting.

LEC presents a well rounded program of basic skills and elective type courses which appeal to the general interest of all students. Classes are taught in a stimulating manner giving very little reason for students to be off task. The small class sizes of from 8 to 10 students enable teachers to give attention immediately which is what these students seem to need most.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Although students who enroll at LEC usually have records of high absenteeism in regular school, they attend very well at the Center. Average daily attendance has been about 80 percent or better for several years, and remained at that level last year. It is possible that the carryover of a fair number of students from one year to the next sets the pattern of attendance for successive years. LEC monitors attendance quite carefully, and it seems to be very worthwhile. The main incentive for students to attend regularly is to maintain their enrollment at LEC or to get recommendations for transitioning.

Achievement in reading and math is assessed formally by a standardized test (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills), and by progress monitoring of sequences within the reading/language usage and math curriculums. Both indicators show satisfactory progress for about two-thirds to three-fourths of the students which corresponds to the director's estimates. Each year 20 - 25 percent are dropped for attendance or behavior problems.

When a student has made sufficient progress in terms of attendance, classroom performances, and attitude, a conference is held to determine the student's readiness for transitioning. Each year about a dozen students are transitioned during the year, with about 15 more expected to transition in the fall. In spring, students not ready for transitioning to regular schools are expected to return to LEC in the fall. The number returning comprises about half of the Center's spring enrollment. The average duration of stay at LEC is about six months.

Observations in classrooms indicated students appeared to get along well with the staff and with each other. They cooperated well and did not seem to require much encouragement to begin or continue work. Virtually all students appeared to accept the regimen, worked diligently, and remained on task. Their behavior at breaks in the hallways and in the area of the Center was also quite satisfactory. Overall, the achievements of the students academically and behaviorally seems acceptable.

COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

In general, LEC appears to be operating much like it has been the past four or five years with some signs of stability and maturity accompanying signs of improvement. Students appear to have assumed considerable responsibility for their learning and go about the task with much more maturity than in earlier years. Perhaps the most striking observation is the level of maturity that students exhibit. Staff members treat students with high levels of expectation and the students respond accordingly.

Overall, LEC provides a very acceptable alternative for students to continue their education beyond the point when they might not have done otherwise. A large proportion return to regular public schools and it is estimated that about 75 percent of these are successful.

OPEN MEADOW LEARNING CENTER

Facilities and Resources

The Open Meadow Learning Center (OMLC) began operations in the fall of 1971 and has continued operating since that time. It has been at its present location at 7602 N. Emerald Ave. since September 1977. The administrative coordinator is Carole Smith who holds an Ed.M. degree in administration and counseling from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The Center has a 15-member Board of Directors comprised of representatives of businesses and industries, social services, education, parents, and students.

OMLC occupies and uses the facilities of the Columbia Boys Club. The building and rooms, including a gymnasium, are in excellent condition, roomy, and adequately furnished. Learning materials and equipment seem appropriate and in adequate supply for the programs. A nearby obstacle course is used periodically for group development and team building exercises.

The total budget for the 1982-83 school year is $126,795. Portland Public Schools contract is for $27,564, and anticipated State Basic School Support is $17,849. Other major sources of funds include contracts with the Juvenile Services Commission, Juvenile Justice Department, and special education department; contributions from private foundations; and tuition based on ability to pay.

Staff

The OMLC staff consists of five full-time professionals who share the administrative tasks as well as teach. Each has had three to eight years of experience in working with high risk adolescents with emotional and behavioral problems. The staff member who coordinates the special education services holds a basic secondary teaching certificate with endorsement in basic handicapped learner certification. All staff members hold degrees from major universities; three have done graduate work in counseling. Based on combined experience and formal education, the staff is well qualified to conduct the program.

Due to the relatively low salary and other related financial incentives, it is not uncommon for staff members to remain at the Center for two or three years or less. Fortunately, through a combination of continuity and the recruitment of well-qualified staff, the program has not suffered from the high turnover. The number of staff members has remained about the same over the years.

Performances of the staff members are evaluated annually by using a special evaluation form. Students also complete evaluations of the staff. Formal evaluations are necessary for the accreditation of the Center and its program.

In addition to instruction and counseling services provided by the staff, OMLC refers and uses the services of about 25 other agencies. Services of the North Portland Youth Service Center, Delauney Mental Health Center, Mainstream, Planned Parenthood, Harry's Mother, and PCC-GED/ABE are used most frequently. Instead of maintaining a waiting list, OMLC chooses to make referrals when it is unable to accommodate a student at the time.

Students

OMLC's contract with Portland Public Schools states that an enrollment of 20 students will be maintained. An enrollment of nearly 35 is maintained, with an unduplicated count of 55 enrolled during the year. Nearly all are residents of the Portland district, with about 75 percent residing in the north Portland area.

Upon application, students go through a review process where information about them is obtained, and they, in turn, learn about the rules and policies of OMLC. The 1981-82 students ranged in age from about 13 to 18 years at the time of their admission with about 80 percent in the 15 to 17 years range. About 75 percent were white; the remaining were about equally represented by Black, American Indian, and Hispanic. There were about an equal number of males and females, and the Center tries to maintain that balance.

About 60 percent of the students resided with a single parent, 30 percent with two parents, and most of the remaining in foster homes. Nearly all were from low income families and were eligible for free or "reduced lunch," as determined by FDA family income standards.

Most students (87 percent) had current or previous contact with juvenile courts. Over half were referred by juvenile courts with many on probation or parole. The most common problems leading to the students' referrals to OMLC rather than public schools were verbal abuse and difficulty in complying with regular school schedules and policies. The use of controlled subtances was also a common problem.

The number of students maintained at OMLC remains about the same since the Center has been at its present location. Student characteristics remain about the same over the years except there are more with juvenile court records. Support from the legal agencies has accompanied the trend.

Program

The OMLC program is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, and the Center is registered with the State Department of Education as a private school. The Center must maintain certain records, meet various requirements, and be subject to periodic review by the Association to continue accreditation.

The curricular program is scheduled to correspond to public school quarters and semesters. The schedule was changed recently to facilitate the student transfer of academic credits. OMLC is also authorized to issue a high school diploma and does so for a few students each year. A significant goal is for students to meet Portland Public Schools graduation requirements, whether at OMLC or another public high school. OMLC is currently negotiating to use the PPS graduation standards tests.

Students attend five 40-minute class periods per day beginning at 9:00 a.m. and dismissing at 1:30 p.m.; lunch is served at the Center. Course offerings are much like those of regular high schools. Mathematics, social studies, language arts, and physical education are basic and are repeated each

quarter. Some electives are repeated (e.g., career education, psychology, personal finance, Spanish), while others are offered only once. Students have individual education plans based on the course offerings.

In addition to achievement academically, changes in the way students deal with their social and physical environment are equally important. Reducing their involvement with the courts and developing independent living skills are, perhaps, the main focus of the program. Satisfactory outcomes for students who leave OMLC are transitioning to regular schools, working on GED, graduating from OMLC, or getting a meaningful job.

Evaluations of the student's preparedness to leave OMLC are conducted when the student decides to leave. While no absolute criteria are used, considerations are given to behavior, attendance, academic achievement, and unique student circumstances. Records of behavior, attendance, and achievement are maintained, and certain performance requirements must be met for students to remain at the center.

In general, the OMLC program is much the same as it has been for the last few years; staff members have made improvements based on their past experiences and their individual talents.

Achievement

Four indicators of achievement seem relevant for OMLC students: 1) attendance, 2) achievement test scores, 3) academic credit earned, and 4) year-end status.

Students who attend OMLC usually have had a variety of chronic attendance problems extending over several years; however, the average attendance of the 55 students enrolled during the 1981-82 school year was just over 85 percent. Students must maintain a minimum of 75 percent attendance in each class to receive academic credit. For some students, regular attendance is required by the juvenile courts. The fact that the minimum requirement is exceeded quite substantially tends to indicate that few, if any, students press the limits intentionally. The duration of stay at OMLC ranges from about two quarters to a year and up to two years.

Achievement tests (Portland Achievement Level Tests) in mathematics, reading, and language usage are administered in the fall and spring. Scores for 26 students who had both pretest and post-test scores indicated they made substantial gains during the year. The gains probably reflect some learning as a result of instruction and the students' performances of class work. In addition, it is possible that part of the gain may be a result of changes in the students' test-taking attitude, i.e., they take tests more seriously after they have been in school awhile.

Academic credits are awarded for maintaining attendance and completing work required in the classrooms. Records indicate that the students who were served earned an average of nearly one credit each in all four quarters of the 1981-82 school year. This credit is transferable to any Portland school or may be applied toward graduation from OMLC.

The year-end status of students is the final indicator of achievements. Records for 1981-82 show the following outcomes and the numbers for each:

Acquired a diploma	4
Transitioned to public schools	7
Promoted from junior high to high school	8
Transitioned to GED program	8
Completed GED program	4
Enrolled in appropriate training	4
Obtained full-time employment	2
Returned to OMLC	24

A few students (N = 6) were included in two categories (e.g., transitioning to and completing GED); therefore, the total indicates 61 students rather than 55.

Although no formal follow-up of students several months or a year later is conducted, earlier estimates indicated that perhaps 75 percent or more were successful transitions. This estimate is comparable to the outcomes reported by the other two private alternative schools.

Comments and Conclusions

The OMLC program continues to operate in much the same manner as in previous years, with some changes. The organization of the schedule into quarters rather than short six-week workshop blocks seems to be working satisfactorily. The short blocks were established several years ago when the OMLC staff found it difficult to maintain student effort over the longer duration. OMLC is now able to maintain student effort without too much difficulty.

Some courses, especially elective courses, have changed and include an interesting variety, several of which are tailored to the student's circumstances (e.g., legal system, career education). Regardless of the course content, the classes seem to be functioning well with student participation at a very high level.

Considering the fact that virtually all students probably had negative relationships with regular schools (e.g., expelled or suspended for attendance or behavior/discipline problems), their behavior in OMLC classes is quite remarkable. Observations in three different classes going on simultaneously in three separate rooms found every student engaged in constructive activity nearly 100 percent of the time. Furthermore, this behavior was achieved and maintained with very little apparent pressure from the teachers; students were enthusiastic and participated eagerly in the class work. The small class size and particularly the way the staff relates to the students, perhaps, are the major factors in developing the favorable classroom atmosphere.

OMLC provides a palatable educational alternative for students who otherwise have difficulty maintaining attendance in regular public schools. Students appear to gain academically and especially behaviorally, as indicated by achievement and outcome information. The fact that OMLC is able to serve less than half of the students who apply indicates a continuing need for the services of the Center.